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ASPULI, DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

Year ending December 31st, 1898.

About the 24th of February a sudden outbreak of Measles occurred in New Springs, 52 cases being reported in two days. I advised the closing of New Springs Schools, which had the desired effect of checking the disease; and the schools were reopened in the second week in March.

In October, Measles again made its appearance, this time at Lane Ends, and I advised the closing of the schools in that neighbourhood, which had a salutary effect on the outbreak. One of the greatest difficulties in dealing with an outbreak of Measles is the inborn tendency of many parents to look on this disease as a simple matter, or at any rate as an affection all children must have sooner or later, whereas in young children it is quite as fatal as Scarlet Fever, and by proper care and isolation success usually attends the efforts made to check its progress. I would suggest that your Council should consider the advisability of placing this disease on the list of those notifiable.

Scarlet Fever was very prevalent in the districts of Haigh Road, Ratcliffe Road, and Scot Lane, during January, February, and March; and later on a few were reported in New Springs; the Gullet remaining comparatively free until December, when 14 cases were reported in the vicinity of the New Schools, Higher Gullet, nearly all occurring in families of which some member had been attending this school, the probability being that a child had had the disease in so mild a form as to escape notice, and so disseminated it amongst the others. I advised that this school should be kept closed for a fortnight after the termination of the Christmas holidays, and that the interior of the buildings should be fumigated and cleaned down. I have every reason to believe that the managers of these schools cordially agreed to and carried out effectually the suggestions of your Council in this matter.

Taking the township as a whole, considerable progress has been made in its sanitary condition during the past and several preceding years, but it has been necessary, in order to enforce the decrees of your Council during the past year, to prosecute the owners, in ten cases, of insanitary property. It is to be hoped that it will not be necessary to adopt such extreme measures for some time to come.

The roads and streets are steadily undergoing a change for the better, and Ash Lane, which has been the subject of several reports, is now in a better state of repair than it has been for many years.

Now that we have an almost perfect system of transport for the sewage, I would suggest that it be made use of as much as possible, and where practicable a water carriage system should supplant the objectionable midden; 15 of the latter have been so converted during the year; 70 new closets and ash pits have been erected; 261 notices to abate nuisances have been issued by the Inspector; 85 houses have been fumigated and cleaned down; and 5 cases of overcrowding remedied; and frequent inspections of various parts of the district have been made by myself and Nuisance Inspector. The water supply has been good and abundant. No offensive trades have been carried on and it has not been necessary to condemn any articles of food exposed for sale.

I am, Gentlemen,

Obediently yours,

L. COOKE,

Medical Officer of Health.

ASPULL, WIGAN,

January 31st, 1899.

To the Chairman and Members of the Aspull District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ending December 31st, 1898, also lists required by the Local Government Board and County Council.

291 births were registered during the year—males, 148; females, 143; giving a birth rate of 32·5 per 1000 per annum.

The deaths registered were 169—males, 77; females, 92; equal to a death rate of 18·8 per 1000 per annum. 45 were returned as under 1 year, which would be equal to an infantile death rate of 154·6 per 1000 births.

The death rate is slightly in excess of that of the preceding year which was 18·5, and the birth rate a trifle less than in the preceding year which was 34·4; it is satisfactory however to note that the deaths under 1 year are less numerous than in the two previous years.

Under 1 year	45	deaths were registered.
Between 1 and 5 years	44	" "
" 5 " 15 "	2	" "
" 15 " 25 "	10	" "
" 25 " 65 "	44	" "
Over 65 years	24	" "
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Total	169	
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Those due to the principal diseases were Bronchitis and Pneumonia, 33; Heart Disease, 8; Phthisis, 11; Diarrhoea, 6; Whooping Cough, 3; Measles, 14; Typhoid Fever, 7; Croup, 2; Scarlatina, 4; Injuries, 3; Other causes, 78; total 169.

Those due to the principal Zymotic diseases numbered 36, giving a Zymotic rate of 4·0 per 1000. This increase in the Zymotic rate is largely due to the outbreaks of Measles, all the 14 deaths due to this disease and the Bronchitis or Pneumonia which so often accompany it, were in children under 5 years of age.

134 cases were notified under the Notification Act—Scarlet Fever, 103; Typhoid Fever, 14; Erysipelas, 14; Membranous Croup, 2; Diphtheria, 1.

With the exception of June, July, and August, infectious diseases have been prevalent during the whole year. In January, 2 deaths were due to Typhoid Fever, in Scot Lane, these were clearly traced to a cesspool which had evidently been constructed without the Council's consent or knowledge; it communicated on the one side with the main sewer, and on the other side with defective drains leading to the scullery. Nearly all the fatal Typhoids were traced to some defect in the sanitary arrangements in and about the dwellings, either the back yards were filthy, or the drainage bad, or ash pits wet. Many improvements have been effected in regard to privies and ash pits, but so long as back yards and back streets remain unpaved it will be impossible to grapple effectually with this fatal malady. Most of these places are covered with ashes which retain for a long time the noxious matters put out of the ash pits. The paving of back yards and back streets is one of the most important matters that can be pressed forward by your Council.

In February, a Committee was appointed by your Council, to inspect certain premises in New Springs, on which a special report was submitted to you; and in the same month I sent you a report on certain property in Stanley Road.